



Healthy Eating Helps You Make the Grade!

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Tips for Teams

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Helping children “make the grade” means encouraging each child to be the best he or she can be. As a Team Nutrition School, you know that healthy eating provides the daily fuel and long-term nutritional building blocks children need for reaching their goals—in school and at play, today and in the future. Nutritious food choices—combined with physical activity—are the foundation for a healthy lifestyle. For students, this can mean having more energy and concentrating better. A healthy lifestyle is key for children to achieve their personal best—physically, mentally, and socially.

During Team Nutrition Days 1999, you can help children learn to take responsibility for setting personal goals for a healthy lifestyle. You can then highlight the benefits of their healthy food and activity choices and emphasize the critical link between their choices, their health, and their ability to learn. These activities will also strengthen the connection between what they learn in the classroom and what they eat in the school dining room.

TO PARTICIPATE

1. Create a school planning team.

Include representatives of all groups in the school who are interested in healthy children: principal, teachers—including physical education teachers, cafeteria personnel, coaches, school nurse, parents and, of course, students. Then look for community organizations and businesses that might be willing to join the team, donate resources, and participate in Team Nutrition Days. (If you already have a Team Nutrition team or a coordinated school health team, you can use it as the nucleus for the planning team.)

2. Establish dates in March or April for your school to celebrate Team Nutrition Days.

During these two months Team Nutrition Schools across the country will be motivating students to take specific steps toward improving their health and making the most of their educational opportunities.

3. Get out all the resources Team Nutrition has provided.

Now is the time to hang your Team Nutrition banner and find your copies of the materials Team Nutrition has already sent you: *Spread the Word*; *Team Nutrition Days...and Beyond*; *Serving Up Success*; the *1998 Calendar Companion*; the *Food, Family, and Fun* book; the *Great Nutrition Adventure* kit; and the *Leadership Guide*. You may want to establish a permanent Team Nutrition resource center—or a special shelf in the library—to keep Team Nutrition visible in your school and make it easy to plan activities.

4. Plan and conduct Team Nutrition Days activities.

You can start by asking students to set nutrition-related and activity-related personal achievement goals that will help them make the grade physically, mentally, and socially.

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Your team will be able to come up with fresh ideas for activities that will be just right for the children in your school and community. Here are a few starters for your students:

PHYSICAL

- Participate in a family walk (sponsored by the school), followed by nutritious refreshments in the school dining room. Or start the day with warm-up exercises, followed by a school breakfast.
- Select a physical activity—like bike riding, or dancing, or walking your dog—that demonstrates that you don't have to be an athlete to be active. Keep a chart—try to do that activity 10 times in a month. Repetition may make it a pleasant habit! Also select nutritious foods you've never tried before—in the school dining room and at home. Even if you don't like them the first time, try again. It may take a while to get used to new tastes. Keep a chart—try 10 new foods in a month.

MENTAL

- Make a list of ways school meals are related to what you learn in class (for example, school meals help me feel more attentive and alert, school meals let me practice the nutrition education I learn in the classroom, school meals are related to many academic subjects—like math, biology, social studies).

- Write a story, poem, or song—or do an art project—that expresses the connection you see between nutrition and physical activity, health, and learning.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL

- Practice good manners and conversation by eating with an adult in the school dining room (principal and teachers might rotate among tables once a week or the school may invite senior citizens or other volunteers to eat with the students).
- Participate in a “Table Manners Matter” class in the school dining room, given by a teacher or a community volunteer.
- Create table decorations in class as an art project and use them to help make the school dining room a comfortable place to relax and socialize (classes can take turns).
- Work with the cafeteria staff to plan school meals that celebrate cultural diversity.

Your Team Nutrition School is the perfect place for children to learn that they make food and activity choices every day—and those choices count! Healthy eating will help them make the grade throughout their lives.

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We would love to hear about your school's Team Nutrition Days activities. So please share your experience with us through the Internet at teamnutrition@fcs.usda.gov or by writing to Team Nutrition at 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1010, Alexandria, VA 22302

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